



Kaution Korner - October 2024 By Gene "Lucky" Rigsby!

I was going to write this Kaution Korner about winter storage, but that \$%^& can wait!!

It's that time of the year again.... IT'S....Fall riding season... Hell Yeah!! Let's Do It!!!

There is still time to get out on the road and there are opportunities on the Top Cats calendar. Check them out NOW and get them on your calendar. I'll pitch **Rigsby's Ride for Screams on Oct 12**.

We all know about the importance of preparing your bike for the early riding season. TCLOCS is a great way to remember how to do this for the first spring ride. But, getting your bike and yourself ready for fall riding is important too.

Generally, when thinking of fall riding, I think of cool weather and beautiful scenery. But several cautionary items come to mind as well. Like, watching for leaves on the road, early frost (could be in shady spots anytime, even on a mild temp day), deer and other critters getting ready to hibernate, etc....

Here are some suggestions that I know will help make your fall riding safe, as well as some you can use throughout the year:

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY: Plan your route to make the most of daylight hours. Add on extra time for your route. More than you would normally, to do the same route during the summertime. Due to the colder conditions of riding in the fall, you may likely be stopping to warm up along the way. You'll also be tempering your speed due to more slippery road conditions. Plan that your daylight hours are few. So, pick routes that will bring you to your destination and back before dark. Another BIG items to consider for your route plan is Sun glare, which I will dig into in a section below.

CHECK THE WEATHER FORECAST: Pick the better weather forecasted day to take your ride if you can.

CHECK YOUR MOTORCYCLE BATTERY: Be sure to charge up your motorcycle battery the night before to ensure a full charge for your ride. Colder weather makes your battery work more and it can lose its charge quicker than under normal dry warm conditions.

CHECK YOUR TIRES: Due to colder nights and cooler temperatures, your motorcycle [tire pressure](#) may become low. Check your tire pressure for accuracy and proper inflation while also inspecting tread looking for worn tires. During colder weather rides, tread and pressure are equally important and necessary to ensure full grip.

COLD TIRES: Your tires will take longer to warm up during colder temperature days. Make sure the first miles of your morning ride are tackled with smoother than normal inputs (movements) as your tires and the road surface can be super slippery. Your tires will likely not warm to the point you're accustomed to in warmer temps and tires with soft rubber compounds need to warm to perform best. In the cold, they're hard and that traction can be greatly reduced. Go easy!

CHECK LIGHTING SYSTEM: Be sure all your lights are functioning and if you can, increase your lighting quality and clean your lens. Read more on our tips to [BRIGHTEN UP](#).

MOTORCYCLE GEAR: Be warm and be visible. Keeping and staying warm is key to a successful ride, and full concentration at the handlebars. It will be chilly and though you feel warm when you start, wind-chill will quickly change that factor. Heated gear is fabulous and of course add those extra linings to your jacket and pants. Winter riding gloves work well. Don't forget to layer with performance under garments and bring extra layers if you have the room. A rain suit can be used as an added layer as well. Wear high-visibility and reflective gear to make yourself visible to drivers, even in the long shadows of a fall afternoon.

LEAVES: As leaves begin to accumulate on the roadway, they can be very slick. Dry leaves can camouflage potholes and other road irregularities. Wet/icy leaves are most slippery and can appear unexpectedly in shaded areas. Wet or dry, riding through stacks of leaves can reduce traction, making it difficult to stop. Avoid them if possible or adjust speed and trajectory.

ROAD SURFACE: Be aware of frost on the roadway in the early morning hours. Be sure to pay particular attention for frost on bridge decks or other higher surfaces, railroad crossings, and in shady areas where the morning sun may not have melted the frost yet. Adjust your riding speed for the conditions

SUN GLARE: The sun is lower in the sky at this time of year and its glare can be an issue for much of the day, depending on the direction you're riding (Plan your Journey). Along with this, as trees become barren of leaves, the patterns of light and shade can be like riding in a strobe light. This can be distracting and confusing. Good sunglasses or a tinted visor work best. Be sure not to forget your clear visor so you can switch for the ride home when it the sun is setting or down.

SPACE CUSHIONS: Give yourself enough following distance and space cushioning. It's not only difficult for you to see the road this time of year, but equally challenging for other drivers to see you. Allow extra time to react both in front and behind you. Slow down, look further ahead and increase your following distance.

DEER AND MOOSE: Autumn is the time of year deer and moose mate, meaning – they'll be more active. These animals are huge hazards for motorcyclists. Try to plan your ride during daylight hours only. The best defense is to stay aware, particularly while riding in rural areas. Scan the roadway ahead and just off the shoulders and watch for deer crossings. Typically, deer movement will peak at dusk and dawn. Areas where crops or timber are relatively close to the road will present the greatest challenge as these are ideal places for deer to cross. Unfortunately, it's these zones which provide you the shortest reaction time. Slow and prepare for the risk.

WIND: This time of year, is usually accented by gusty strong winds. These can unsettle your bike and blow you a little of course within your lane. To manage this, look for signs. For example, try looking ahead at the trees and bushes, and note the behavior of other vehicles to see how the wind is affecting them. Strong winds are not constant, they are usually gusty. So, ensure you hold the handlebar handgrip firmly. Go slow enough to cope with the gusts.

With good planning you'll be able to enjoy one of the most pleasurable and spectacular riding seasons!

Edited excerpt from: 13 Things For A Great Ride suggested by <https://motoress.com>

Gene "Lucky" Rigsby - Senior Road Captain